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SUBJECT: UNAMI EXPANSION PLANS

I1. (SBU) Summary: Following the January visit to Baghdad of UN Under Secretary for Safety and Security David Veness, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has been given permission to raise its international staff ceiling to 140, which means an increase of 19 professional staff. Given this decision, UN specialized agencies, including UNHCR and UNICEF, will now assign permanent staff to Baghdad. In a related move, UNAMI is looking at ways to expand its reach throughout Iraq, and as initial steps will consider loosening travel restrictions in the Kurdish north, as well as basing UN military advisers with MNF-I in Kirkuk and Fallujah to facilitate UN travel to those cities. Regarding UNAMI's long-term facility, SRSG de Mistura continues to work with the U.S. to secure approval for UN use of the "Georgian" compound adjacent to the new U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad.. End summary.

STAFFING

I2. (SBU) Darko Mocibob, team leader for Iraq in the UN's Department of Political Affairs, accompanied Veness on his recent trip to Iraq. Mocibob confirmed that, effective immediately, the ceiling for international staff in Baghdad is raised to 140. This translates into 19 additional slots for professional personnel. UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres is expected to announce shortly that five UNCHR staff will be assigned to Baghdad. Other specialized agencies such as UNICEF are planning to assign senior-level representatives to Baghdad.

I3. (SBU) In an attempt to expand UNAMI's reach throughout the country, the UN is also considering loosening travel restrictions in the north, said Mocibob. Currently, UN staff must be escorted by MNF-I personnel. New rules being considered drop that requirement, and require only that UN military advisers with direct communication links to MNF-I rapid reaction forces accompany all UN movements. In Kurdish areas, the UN would still be escorted by KRG security forces.

In Basrah, the UN has already established a de facto presence, said Mocibob, with two UNAMI staff on the ground at the Basrah Air Station. Over the coming weeks, the UN expects more slots for its staff to open, and hopes to have as many as 11 personnel in Basrah Air Station by March.

I4. (SBU) Mocibob said the UN has noted the increased capability of Iraq security forces, and therefore has decided to increase the ceiling for UNAMI military advisers from 7 to 17, and has also begun consideration of deploying as many as 4 police advisers, to improve UNAMI's coordination/capacity-building with Iraqi police. Within the coming months, security conditions permitting, the UN also plans on deploying military advisers to Kirkuk and Fallujah.

FUTURE HEADQUARTERS

I5. (SBU) Veness visited the "Georgian" compound during his visit to Baghdad, and came away with the impression that it

would work as a long-term facility for the UN. Given that the UN would be in the new diplomatic compound, its security costs would plummet, said Mocibob. Veness and SRSG de Mistura met with General Petraeus and Mochibob said the UN understood from this meeting that the United States was prepared to offer the entire "Georgian" compound to the UN. However, a subsequent letter sent by U.S. authorities in Baghdad said the UN could only be given half of the Georgian compound due to competing space needs, which the UN judges is insufficient for its needs. Mocibob said de Mistura is working on this issue with MNF-I and Embassy Baghdad, and hopes to achieve a resolution as soon as possible, given that this approval is a prerequisite for the UN to begin the planning process. Mocibob said Iraqi NSA Mowaffak al-Rubaie told Veness that Iraq would have no problem giving the UN a long-term lease to the "Georgian" compound site.

WOLFF